

Connecticut Arts Council Meeting
Monday, May 5, 2025
1:00 pm
Zoom

MINUTES

Present: Floyd Green, Dwayne Harris, Jacqui Hubbard, Andrew Linde, Sarah McKay, Judy McElhone, Jack Rosenberg, Elizabeth Shapiro, and Brian Walters

Guest: Rufus de Rham and Denise Massingale-Lamb

Absent: Mary Ellen Kingsland-Eckels

Staff: Tamara Dimitri, Mel Díaz, Kolton Harris, Sybelle Moise, Tekowa Omara-Otunnu, and Kim Parsons-Whitaker

Call to Order

Chairman Jack Rosenberg called the meeting to order at 1:02 pm.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Rosenberg asked if there were any comments, questions, or edits to the minutes. Hearing none, he requested a motion to approve the April meeting minutes.

Motion to approve the minutes of the April 7th meeting.

Motion: J. Hubbard | Second: F. Green | Discussion: No additional discussion.

In favor: 8, Opposed: 0, Abstentions: 0

April meeting minutes approved.

Community Input and Advocacy Updates

Council Member Sarah McKay welcomed CT Art Alliance (CAA) Director Rufus de Rham. de Rham reported on the series of town halls in partnership with CT Humanities, the League of Museums, and the Library Consortium regarding the IMLS and NEH funding. It has been a way to listen to communities' concerns and share any federal updates. He also announced the Arts, Culture, and Tourism Advocacy Day at the Capitol on May 7th. There are 53 organizations already registered with tables, and it is open to the public. CAA continues to gather information from those organizations that lost funding recently to share accurately and try to ensure no further loss of funding.

McKay thanked de Rham for joining the meeting and reminded the Council that it was decided to add a recurring agenda item to get community input as part of the Council's advocacy work during the last meeting. Council Members shared their individual or organizational advocacy and community outreach efforts. McKay stated that for the next meeting, this section would include input from the community.

Artist Fellowship Report

Program Specialist Tamara Dimitri gave a presentation on the Artist Fellowship grant program, the types of grants awarded, and highlighted some of this year's recipients and the feedback received by the grant reviewers. A total of 84 grants were awarded.

Council thanked Dimitri for her presentation, and Chairman Rosenberg asked her to join another meeting to explain how the selection process is done and give more information on the peer review panels.

Director's Report

Director Elizabeth Shapiro started her report by sharing that Program Associate Tekowa Omara-Otunnu was in DC for POL Nationals. Arts Pharmacy continues moving forward and has over 100 cultural organizations registered as approved participants. And the partnership announcement with the Innovation Summit and five theaters as art entrepreneurship incubators.

Shapiro will be attending a meeting with NASAA to receive further federal updates. The NEA rescinded grant offers for grants that had not already been issued. However, COA has received no new information on how State Art Agency funding will be impacted by those decisions. The 2026 fiscal year presidential budget recommended the removal of NEA, NEH, and IMLS funding. Our federal delegation is aware of what is happening and supportive of trying to reinstate the funding.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Rosenberg stated he sent a draft letter to the Council this afternoon as a starting point for a discussion on whether the Council should consider doing anything about the loss of funding. Council members supported the intention of solidarity but felt the Council should support the organizations already doing the advocacy work and attending the events already scheduled.

Other Business

There was no "other business" to discuss.

Adjournment

Rosenberg asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 2.25 pm.

Motion: S. McKay | Second: B. Walters | Discussion: No additional discussion.

In favor: 8, Opposed: 0, Abstentions: 0

The meeting adjourned at 2.25 pm.